

# Youth Development in Hampton: Shaping the Future

August  
2002

## The Conference

*Global economics, students ahead of teachers in technology, government funding for faith community, diversity, community service, under-represented and un-affiliated youth, non-traditional families, 9-11 . . .*

Phrases filled the wall, stretched across the paper like a sunburst surrounding the simple central statement: the Future of Youth Development in Hampton. Participants, young and old, crowded in front of their creation, deliberating. Which of these trends are affecting us? What are we doing about them? What do I, personally, care about most?



This was a typical scene at Hampton's first Future Search Conference, July 11 to 13, 2002, where 65 youth and adults gathered to explore **Youth Development in**



**Hampton 2010.** They shared ideas, posed questions, laughed, discovered common ground, and, in the end, dreamed of an ideal future for ALL Hampton's youth.

Future Search is not your typical planning process. It's a gathering of "stakeholders" with a passion for the topic - in this case, YOUTH. Parents, youth advocates, managers of youth-focused organizations, community leaders, business representatives, educators, city government officials and youth themselves all shared the spotlight. All had an equal voice in crafting a vision

for the city's approach to youth development in the next decade.

**INSIDE:** Results of the conference, the TEN THEMES, how to get involved

## The Results

Toward the end of the Future Search conference, 10 themes began to emerge. Self-selected "champions" claimed each of the themes and new groups coalesced around the topics, creating the beginnings of a new youth agenda for the city. Armed with ideas and new energy these groups made plans to meet again, work together and support this new agenda as it unfolds. Check out these themes on the next 2 pages.

### Not-so Risky Business

The bottom line is — good youth development makes good business sense. This theme of Business Support focuses on businesses as active partners in supporting youth development in a variety of ways. A limited perspective of businesses as partners doesn't really tap their potential. Besides donations, businesses provide valuable roles in partnerships, workforce and life skill opportunities. This group is seeking business men and women willing to participate in a Focus Group that will generate strategies.

"This conference was great. Especially the energy. I even wish it had been longer."

*Steve Brown,  
Minister at Calvary Community Church, chair of Citizens' Unity Commission*

### Bring 'Em Back

If part of a good youth development agenda is supporting youth to contribute to our community, then what about the older youth who leave us and don't return? Some call this the 'brain drain' - we invest in talented and dedicated youth who then go off to college, job training or the military, and we never collect on our investment.

This theme is about bringing back the best and brightest to be part of our workforce and community. The project already has a workplan and initial community support.

### A Place of their Own

The idea of a teen center has been around for long time. Now that momentum is building and a center is designated in the city's 2005 capital improvement plan, it is time to generate widespread community support. This theme focuses on the need for resources to create a facility focused on teens and teen-related activities. Within the next 3 to 6 months, this group will kick off a campaign to communicate the need and raise support.

"I'm glad the Teen Center was selected as one of the topics. It gives us a good push and some more support to make it happen."

*Rashida Costley, Youth Planner,  
Hampton Planning Department*

### Teach Your Children Well

The Education theme has 3 areas of focus that emphasize the ways a community and its youth development system impact the education of our youth. This group wants to shift the focus of the educational system to ensure all children enter school ready to learn, students learn life skills in addition to SOLs, and youth are prepared for jobs if not going to college. To do this will require broad collaboration and community support.

"Early literacy skills are the best predictor of success in school and in the workforce. Supporting parents and others in providing positive early learning experiences for children, birth to kindergarten, is a wise investment."

*Keith Sykes,  
Director of  
Square One*

### **Walking our Walk, Talking our Talk**

We're pioneers — in 2010 youth development will be the community norm! This theme acknowledges Hampton's initial successes and pledges to ensure that youth development is the community's natural way of doing business. That means the city as a whole and ALL the systems that impact youth. We'll know we are successful when local folks are as knowledgeable and enthusiastic about our efforts as people who have visited from other communities.

"We are doing wonderful things with some young people, but we need to cast a wider net."

*Johnny Pauls,  
coordinator for secondary instruction,  
Hampton City Schools*

### **What's in a Name**

How do we create a pervasive culture of youth development? We create and disseminate a consistent, clear message around youth development in the community. This theme about building our message and sharing it with others has been combined with the above group.

### **No Child Left Behind**

A common theme at the conference was the need to expand our efforts to ensure that ALL youth and their families have the benefit of our youth development efforts. Not just those already involved, not just those reached by traditional funding sources. What about the everyday, ordinary, wonderful, waiting to be discovered youth who have fallen through the cracks? We need to learn more about who gets involved and why. This topic is an overarching issue for any future youth agenda.

### **It's About Relationships**

The 40 developmental assets campaign is all about building relationships between kids and adults. This message must be spread throughout the community. How about targeting some special relationships? This group talked about increasing support for parents of teens.

### **When Youth Speak**

Hampton has an extensive and credible system for engaging youth; but, we still have a long way to go. This theme of Enhanced Youth Voice envisions young people involved in decision-making around issues that impact them. That means both at the operational and the policy level. Of the many organizations to support in enhancing youth voice, members of this group propose to focus first on schools.

### **Show Me the Money**

All of this youth development cannot be accomplished without Ample Resources. Funding, places, materials, and people are all essential to sustain what already exists as well as create the vision for the next 10 years. This group envisions a formal structure having resources to continue to support, improve, and grow our ongoing youth development system.

"All these youth advocates in one room were able to renew our energy and prepare ourselves for the challenges ahead. We now have a core of ideas that are essential to support if young people are to grow up strong and successful."

*Mike Canty,  
Director, In Sync  
Partnerships*

## The Plan

The 10 themes, outlined on the inside pages, provide a foundation to guide Hampton's youth agenda. Though not inclusive of everything that needs to be done, they represent the best thinking and the areas of interest and passion of a representative group of Hampton citizens. These "hot topics" and the suggested strategies that grow out of them will become the center of a youth development agenda that builds upon the successes of the past and continues to ensure that all our young people contribute to the community and enhance the quality of life of our city.

## The Future

Hampton's Youth Agenda 2010 is an ongoing process with lots of opportunity for involvement. If you or anyone you know has an interest in any of these topics, please contact the Hampton Coalition for Youth at 728-3280 or [foryouth@hampton.gov](mailto:foryouth@hampton.gov).



We need **your time, your talents and your resources**. We need **your commitment** to youth development. Together we will create an ideal future for **Hampton's youth**.



"I would say to adults, don't blow us off. We may seem like we don't care, but if you really listen to us, you'll find we have a lot to say and there's a lot of wisdom we can give."  
*Allison Flores, chair, Hampton Youth Commission*